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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Electronic Media Services

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2636

November 12, 1993

HIGHER PRICES -- Season-average farm prices for soybeans are expected to range between \$5.85 and \$6.50 per bushel for the 1993/94 marketing year, up from \$5.60 last year. U.S. ending stocks are likely to be lower this year at 205 million bushels. Exports are expected to be lower as large South American crops increase competition and world demand lags. Soybean meal production will decline 3 percent to 29 million tons, and meal exports will drop to 5 million tons as demand falls. Soybeans oil production this year will increase to 14 billion pounds. Increased domestic use will offset reduced exports. Contact: Scott Sanford (202) 219-0840.

CRP PAYMENTS -- Cash payments of \$1.8 billion are being made to qualified producers on 375,000 contracts in USDA's Conservation Reserve Program. Under the program producers retire from production for 10 to 15 years eligible cropland that is highly erodible or contributing to a serious water quality program. In return USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation makes annual rental payments to the producers and shares with them the cost of establishing an approved vegetative cover. 36 million acres have been enrolled in the program. Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

MILK PRODUCTION -- Another record is expected to be posted for milk production in 1994. Production per cow is forecast to more than compensate for the small decline in average cow numbers. Commercial use of dairy products is expected to rise 1 to 2 percent. Farm milk prices will not reach this year's levels because of rising milk production and continued weakness in commercial use of skim solids. Contact: Jim Miller (202) 219-0770.

PEANUT PRODUCTION DOWN -- U.S. peanut production this season is estimated at 3.2 billion pounds, a 24 percent decline from last season, and the smallest crop since 1980. Drought is the major factor. Larger stocks and reduced demand are expected to moderate any upward pressure on prices. Contact: Scott Sanford (202) 219-0840.

BEEF PRODUCTION UP -- U.S. beef production is projected to increase 3 percent to 11 million tons in 1994. First quarter production will likely be larger than the same period in 1993. Fed cattle prices are expected to average in the mid-\$70's for much of next year, and peak seasonally next spring in the mid to upper \$70's, well below this year's \$80-plus high. Beef imports are expected to decline 1.6 percent to 1 million tons in 1994. Contact: Jim Fowler (202) 720-1350.

PORK PRODUCTION -- Higher hog prices in the second half of this year and into 1994 should encourage producers to expand hog production next year. Since pork production in early 1994 will come from the second-half 1993 pig crop, 1994 pork production will be about the same as in 1993. Higher U.S. hog prices in 1994 will encourage imports, especially if European pig prices remain depressed. Karen Utrecht (202) 720-8252.

NATIONAL RANKING -- The nations of the former Soviet Union are the world's largest producers of wheat. In 1993/94 they are forecast to produce 88 million tons, about the same as year-ago figures. The European Community is the world's second largest producer at 81 million tons, down about 3 percent. The United States is third at 65 million tons, down 2 percent from last year. U.S. wheat exports are projected down 18 percent to 30.5 million tons. Contact: Sara Schwartz (202) 219-0824.

CIGARETTE EXPORTS -- U.S. cigarette exports during the January through August period totaled 119 billion pieces, valued at \$2.4 billion. This represents the same quantity but a 1 percent decline in value from year ago levels. The leading export market was Japan at 35 billion pieces. Contact: Peter Burr (202) 720-9524.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN U.S. AG -- During the period 1981 to 1992 foreign investment in U.S. agricultural land increased from 12.7 million acres valued at \$8.5 billion in 1981 to 14.5 million acres valued at \$11 billion in 1992. Canada is the largest single country investor, followed by the United Kingdom. The European Community, as a bloc, is the largest source of investment for land. Slightly more than 1 percent of U.S. agricultural land, and about 15 percent of assets in the food manufacturing industry, are foreign owned. Most foreign owned U.S. acreage is forestland. Foreign investment is nearly balanced by U.S. investment abroad. Contact: Christine Bolling (202) 219-0668.

CURBING WIND EROSION -- Two methods that control wind erosion in arid regions is to plant winter cover crops and leave crop residue on the surface. But the cover crop removes soil moisture and crops often suffer the following year. In studies of wind erosion researchers with USDA's Agricultural Research Service are using 3/4 inch-diameter pellets made from waste paper. Nontoxic material that dissolves out of the paper bonds together sand particles. The 2-inch long pellets suppress weeds and absorb water similar to sponges, preventing water evaporation while allowing plant roots access. Wind tunnel tests are scheduled to determine how many pellets will be needed per acre to control wind erosion. The pellets show promise in reducing erosion, improving water quality, and recycling waste materials. Contact: Donald Fryrear (915) 263-0293.

THE GREYING OF AMERICA'S FARMERS -- Census of Agriculture data show an increase in the average age of farm operators and a steep decline in the number of farmers under age 25. In studies for the years 1982 to 1987 the average age of farmers increased from 50.5 years to 52 years. In 1987 more than 21 percent of all farmers were age 65 or more. By comparison, only 3 percent of the total U.S. labor force is 65 or higher. During the 1982-1987 period the number of farmers under age 25 declined from 62,336 to 35,851. Farm entrants have been drawn from the pool of young people raised on farms. This pool of potential farm entrants may shrink by 30 percent between 1992 and 1997. The most noticeable trend over the past several decades has been a steady decline in the number of middle-age farmers. The number of farm operators age 35-64 fell from 3.2 million in 1954 to 1.4 million in 1987. Contact: Fred Gale (202) 219-0525.

FOOD IS A BARGAIN -- Americans spend only 8 percent of their personal consumption expenditures for food to be eaten at home. This compares with 11 percent for Canada, nearly 12 percent for the United Kingdom. In less developed countries such as India and the Philippines, at-home food expenditures account for more than half of a household's budget. Contact: Judith Putnam (202) 219-0870.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1901 -- One of the cornerstones of the Clinton Administration's initiative to reduce pesticide use is integrated pest management that takes a holistic approach to agricultural pest control. John Snyder reviews IPM and how its potential can be enhanced to reduce pesticide use.

CONSUMER TIME #1383 -- Thanksgiving origins; cooking your holiday turkey; turkey myths--the sequel; confessions of a microwave; rural health care outlook. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1893 -- Rural health care options; CO₂ favors mesquite; sustainable forage; new salmonella broth; ginseng. (Weekly reel of features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1646 -- Halting hydrilla?; waning water hyacinth; Everglades threat; pasture alternatives; white asparagus. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Monday, November 22, catfish processing, cotton & wool outlook, livestock update; Tuesday, November 23, feed outlook, weekly weather and crop update, sheep & lambs on feed. These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on safe preparation of holiday turkey to prevent foodborne illness; Scott Huffman and Tyson Gair report on soybean research at Mississippi State University; Pat O'Leary reports on windbreak weed barriers.

ACTUALITIES -- Gene Moos, USDA undersecretary for international affairs and commodity programs, on the benefits of NAFTA to U.S. agriculture; USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on weather and crop conditions.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on USDA's "Outlook '94" conference; Lynn Wyvill reports on USDA forest products research.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

CATTLE PRODUCERS...are telling **Evan Slack** (Evan Slack Network, Denver, CO) that they are more concerned about the changes in water rights than a boost in grazing fees on Federal land. Evan puts mileage on his airplane to cover events for his listeners. On the immediate schedule are trips to Nevada, Idaho, Montana, and Canada.

ENGINEERS...have placed an additional five feet of levee around the city water works, says **Lee Kline** (WHO Des Moines, IA). Lee says wet conditions since spring were the major factor in reducing the corn crop, not the floods. He says only 57 percent of the crop is rated fair and 30 percent poor.

MOISTURE & TEST WEIGHTS...are high in Minnesota corn, says **Lynn Ketelsen** (Linder Farm Network, Willmar, MN). Farmers are concerned whether their corn crop will qualify for the disaster program.

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THREE STATIONS...have been added to the network, says **Larry Steckline** (Mid America Ag Network, Wichita, KS), in Dodge City, Garden City, and Great Bend. Larry says there is a good calf crop, but cattle producers need higher prices. **Mike Dain** at the network says current health coverage in rural areas is an expensive proposition. Producers tell him that they regard the Administration's health plan as a good start.

DOUBLE CROPPED BEANS...that were already late in development suffered during the recent frost, says **Kevin Jay** (WINU, Highland, IL), lowering quality. Corn yields in his region are about average.

NEW LOOK...has been produced for Ag Day, says **Larry Lyle** (Ag Day, Lafayette, IN). Graphics have been changed, new music, and an updated presentation of material.

Vic Powell
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